ReTRAC Review

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With approval from City Council on February 27, to further the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA's) preferred alternative to eliminating railroad street grade crossings, City of Reno staff have scheduled an organizational stakeholders meeting on Monday, April 16, to kick off the ReTRAC Business Partnership Program.

"The formation of a stakeholders group serves two purposes," says City of Reno Director of Public Works Steve Varela, "First, it encourages any potentially impacted person or business to participate in the ReTRAC project's progress, but it also serves as a means to develop better two-way communication between the city and its citizens."

The April 16 meeting will be from 6-to-9 p.m., in the Silver Legacy's Expo Room A. The Silver Legacy is located at 407 N. Virginia Street, between 4th and 5th streets. Staff anticipates that the stakeholders group will meet three-to-four times a year at various downtown locations.

Stakeholders not only include any business, property owner or resident along the proposed 2.25 mile railroad corridor project, but other agencies such as the Regional Transportation Commission, Amtrak, Greyhound Bus Lines and REMSA.

"The mission of a business partnership program is to work with local residents and businesses at affected areas by focusing on communication, public information and education to minimize impacts of construction and eliminate any surprises," adds Varela.

Beginning Monday, March 5, City staff began canvassing every property owner, business or tenant, from Oxbow Park and Stoker Street on the project's west end, to those located near Sutro Street on the east end. The area of concentration focused on parcels between 2nd and 4th Streets. Canvassing included updating the property owner's name and address, as well as listing any businesses or residences located on the property. Individuals were asked several questions: "What's the best method of communicating information about the project – e-mail, fax or standard mail?", "Do you have any specific issues or concerns that you would like the City to know of as we progress forward?", "Would you like someone from the City to contact you to discuss your concern?", and "How would you like to be involved with the ReTRAC project?"

Responses varied from "I don't have enough information," to "I am concerned about the impacts of construction on my business," and "Get it done."

Stakeholders are those individuals or businesses that could have direct or indirect impacts from the construction of the ReTRAC project. As outlined in the FHWA's final Environmental Impact Statement released last December, direct impacts have specific mitigation measures.

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"The stakeholders group will help us in defining areas of concern," says Varela.

Direct impacts could be:

- parking
- noise
- street closures
- temporary and permanent property acquisition
- business relocation
- other environmental factors (dust, etc.)

Indirect impacts could be:

- business patronage
- delivery systems
- customer travel routes
- employees and suppliers
- hours of operation
- critical times or seasons (peak hours or months)
- other needs as identified by the stakeholders

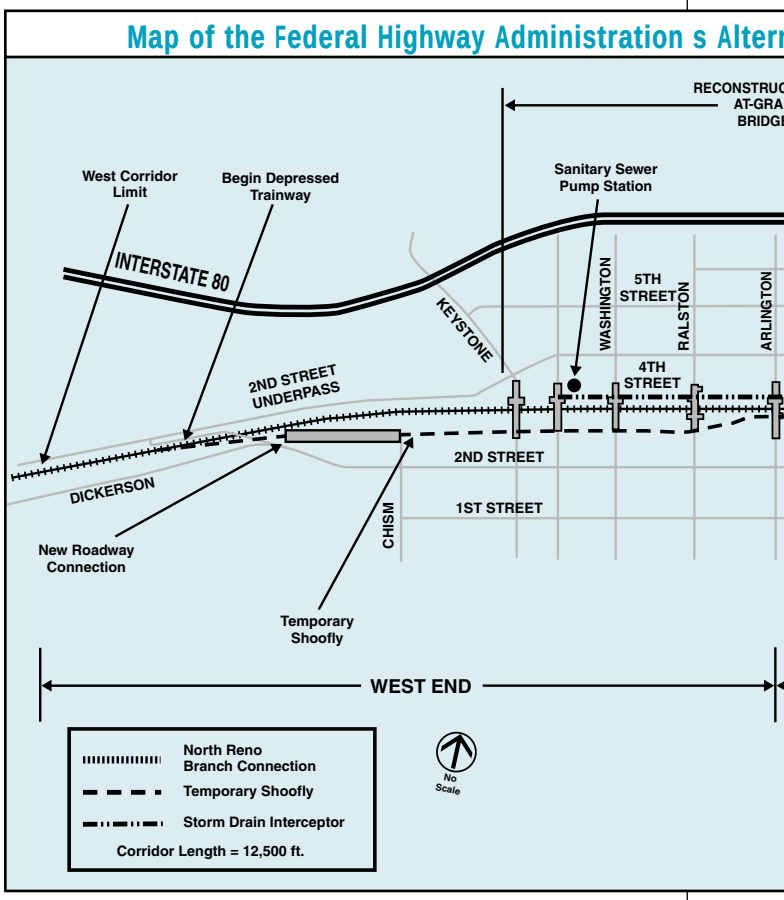
According to Varela, the initial stakeholder meeting is crucial to the success of a partnering program.

"We hope to outline the roles, interests and objectives of stakeholders, which will provide insight to the City, as well as the project management firm, into potential opportunities and problems associated with the project," Varela says.

A relatively new idea, the concept of partnering grew in the late 1980s and early 1990s in the construction industry with numerous success stories. Stakeholders are a voluntary component to the process and success is achieved through the creation of a joint partnership agreement that a contractor must abide by to complete the project. A partnership agreement includes goals and objectives or conditions for the contractor with regard to safety, schedule, quality control, cost control, public and business relations, environmental protection and partnering relations.
It's anticipated that many stakeholders will be present for the April 16 meeting. As a result, the meeting will be facilitated by MIG, Inc., and staff will ask stakeholders to self-appoint representatives from each of their concern areas.

"We prefer a smaller group to work on the partnership agreement," says Varela, "So, it's important that groups such as small businesses, residents or utility companies appoint an individual to represent their issues or needs."

For more information on the meeting, or the Business Partnership Program, contact Gail Conners, ReTRAC public information officer at 326-6315, or connersg@ci.reno.nv.us.



Design-Build or Design-Bid-Build?

In addition to accepting the Federal Highway Administration's preferred alternative for the ReTRAC project, City Council also gave staff the authority to proceed with the project's construction procurement using a design-build process.

Though design-build projects have existed since the early 1900s, it's not considered the primary method of construction project delivery. The traditional method is the design-bid-build method, in which the engineer completes 100 percent of the design component first. The design is then

offered as a competitive bid with the contractor. Usually the lowest, most responsive and qualified bidder is then awarded the contract.

The traditional design-bid-build process enjoyed immense success from the 1920s-to-1970s. It divides responsibility for a project in three ways: the developer defines the scope of the project with a clear budget and program to be implemented; a designer is hired to translate the developer's directions into workable instructions; and the contractor then carries out those instructions. The developer contracts directly with a designer, and separately with a contractor.

With the design-build process, a developer contracts with a single design/builder who takes responsibility for the design as well as its implementation.

In theory, the design-build process accelerates the construction schedule. More widely used in private industry and outside the United States, the design-build process is gaining in momentum. According to Practice Management Associates, Ltd. 1995, in its Design Build Predictions for 1995 and Beyond,"In 1995, design-build projects comprised 29 percent of the construction market. Predictions estimate the market share will reach 49 percent by the turn of the century and 80 percent within the next ten years."

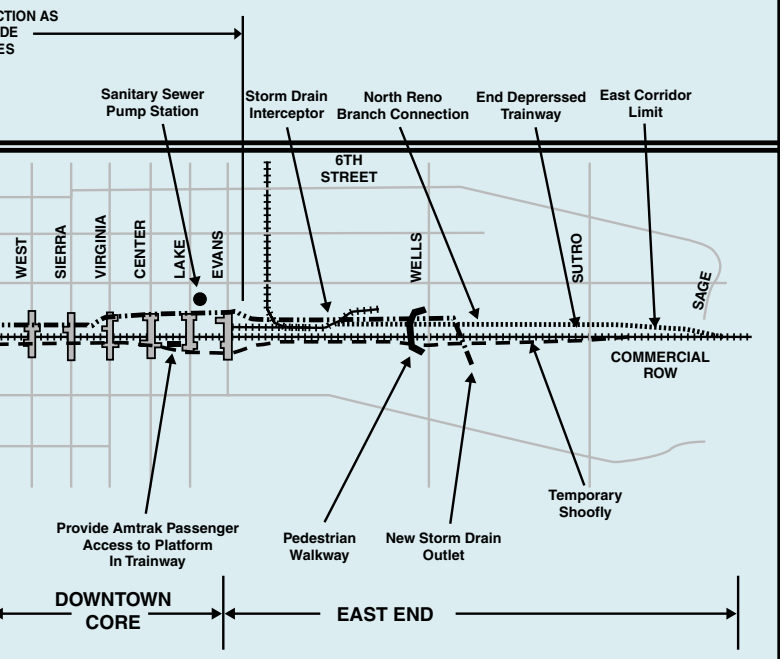
"We're confident that we know what lies beneath the city…"

Steve Varela

The Alameda Corridor Project near Los Angeles uses a design-build process. Similar to ReTRAC's proposed 2.25 mile depressed railway, the Alameda Corridor incorporates a 10-mile depressed railway as part of its overall project. Designing a trench is not considered an issue unto itself – it's the construction of a trench that's the larger issue. A contractor must take into consideration subsurface conditions which can have an effect on the project, such as the existence of boulders and water. Other large-scale projects using a design-build process is the Southeast Corridor Project in Denver, Co., and the I-15 expansion in Utah.

"We're confident that we know what lies beneath the city," says Public Works Director Steve Varela. "As a result, we don't expect any surprises. But having a designer as part of the construction team allows for a more expedient project delivery."

native 5 for the Proposed Railroad Corridor Project



Archaeological Studies Underway

In an effort to better understand what lies beneath Reno's streets before any construction is done for the ReTRAC Project, City Council approved additional archaeological studies at its Feb. 27 meeting.

Council awarded a construction contract to Rapid Construction, under the management of MADCON Consultation Services, to excavate 22 locations for additional archaeological testing. The City of Reno anticipated that archaeological testing would be necessary to accurately gauge buried cultural resources such as building

190 East Liberty Street
P.O. Box 1900
Reno, NV 89505

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foundations, railroad features, historic or Native American artifacts.

"Testing locations were based on the likely location of bridge abutments for a trench project," says Mark Demuth, MADCON principal. "If testing results uncover buried archeological remains, the City would then have to plan an appropriate treatment or data recovery plan."

Recovery plans are then reviewed by the State Historic Preservation Officer and the appropriate Native American government as necessary.

Archaeological testing and excavation is adjacent to the existing railroad right-of-way and is scheduled to begin the week of April 9. Testing will occur on the following streets: Keystone Ave., Vine St., Washington St., Ralston St., Chestnut St., Arlington Ave., West St., Sierra St., Virginia St., Center St., Lake St., Evans Ave., and Sutro St.

"The purpose of much of the testing is to obtain samples of what would have been the outskirts of town where old records aren't as clear," says Demuth.

This photo illustrates a typical backhoe trench used for testing.